

**Dr. Peterson**

**Welcome: National Association of Museum Schools Conference**

8:40 a.m. Monday, June 22, 2015, Georgia Tech Hotel & Conference Center, Salon IV

Thank you, Bert [Thornton]. We at Georgia Tech appreciate your engagement with our Institute and your work as a member of the Georgia Tech Foundation, and I am confident that the people at The Museum School of Avondale Estates feel that they are just as fortunate.

We are very pleased that all of you decided to make Georgia Tech the site of your first national conference. Welcome to Atlanta, and to Georgia Tech. We are in the Georgia Tech Hotel & Conference Center, which is part of Tech Square. And yes, you are on the Georgia Tech campus. Like the schools you represent, Tech Square is a center of innovation, energy, and original thinking.

This was once an area of parking lots and underused real estate. Tech Square opened in 2003, and it's become one of the Southeast's top research hubs. We partner with Atlanta-based businesses to drive innovation, and we help entrepreneurs break into the marketplace. It's also a great learning laboratory for our students.

In the Museum-School model, learning is student-centered, project-based and interdisciplinary. We can relate to that at Georgia Tech. Our world-class faculty is adept at teaching the theory and concepts that undergird scientific learning, but no graduate leaves here without significant hands-on experience in his or her disciplines. And interdisciplinary collaboration isn't just a concept around here — it's a way of life for our students, faculty, and researchers.

One example: This past spring we held our seventh annual InVenture Prize competition. The competition has drawn almost 3,000 participants during its seven years. The finals are broadcast live on Georgia Public Broadcasting, and the atmosphere is very exciting. The winner receives \$20,000, and Georgia Tech provides free licensing. Many winners have gone on to market their products. This spring's winner was a team called FlameTech Grill Defender, which invented a device to make gas grills safer. The winning team had a computer science major, a mechanical engineering major, and a business administration major.

It would be easy for Georgia Tech to become sort of a cloistered academic haven, but we don't see ourselves that way. We are citizens of one of the nation's great cities, and we strive to partner with our metro area communities in ways large and small that benefit us both. That idea has led us to collaborate with The Museum School of Avondale Estates.

Our CEISMC organization (Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics & Computing) worked with The Museum School to set up 50 "Museum in a Box" traveling trunks. Each trunk covers one of eight subject areas, and the program has impacted over 4,000 students in eight Georgia counties. There is now a nearly yearlong waiting list for the trunks filled with lesson plans and hands-on artifacts appropriate for the subject.

CEISMC also had a role in setting up this conference for high-performing charter schools. Some of our CEISMC experts analyzed the data and developed the performance algorithm to identify the top-performing schools.

Another instance of collaboration: The Museum School needed advice about how to maximize the delivery of the school's elementary and middle school STEM education. The Museum School's principal and your organization's executive director, Katherine Kelbaugh, and Bert Thornton, who's on the Georgia Tech Foundation Board of Trustees and TMS Board of Directors, have been working with officials from our Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) to improve that delivery.

If you haven't already, I would encourage you to develop partnerships with the institutions of higher learning in your area. Of course, Georgia Tech has an ulterior motive. Great university students come from great elementary, middle, and high schools.

We're glad you chose Georgia Tech as the site for this historic event. We're also grateful for the innovative work you do to educate our young people. Thank you, and I hope you'll consider this day well spent.